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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE

Thirtieth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 547th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 8 April 1991, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. MIKULKA (Czechoslovakia)

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The elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, with the aim of finalizing the draft set of principles (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

THE ELABORATION OF DRAFT PRINCIPLES RELEVANT TO THE USE OF NUCLEAR POWER SOURCES IN OUTER SPACE, WITH THE AIM OF FINALIZING THE DRAFT SET OF PRINCIPLES (continued)

1. Mr. ISWANDI (Indonesia) said that he welcomed the consensus reached on the six draft principles concerning, respectively, the applicability of international law, guidelines and criteria for safe use, notification of re-entry, consultations, assistance to States, and settlement of disputes. He earnestly hoped that the Subcommittee would focus its attention on final formulation of the remaining principles before reopening discussion on already agreed draft principles. It was particularly important for it to take into account in its debate the consensus that had been reached in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on some aspects of the use of nuclear power sources in outer space.

2. As an equatorial country, Indonesia attached particular importance to the agenda item under consideration because of the inherent hazards of re-entry of space objects into the Earth's atmosphere. Furthermore, no State was immoral from the radioactive contamination that could be caused by malfunctioning space objects with nuclear power sources on board.

3. The Working Group on agenda item 3 should therefore focus on drafting provisions on the effects of radiation and State responsibility in the event of direct, indirect or delayed damage resulting from the use of nuclear power sources. In that respect, working paper A/AC.105/C.2/L.154/Rev.6 submitted by the Canadian delegation could serve as a basis for discussion.

4. In addition, his delegation sincerely hoped that consensus would be reached on the remaining draft principles, and especially on the definition of the term "launching State". It was important for the States having capabilities in space technology and/or the United Nations to study the various aspects of the use of nuclear power sources, such as the dissemination of radioactive substances in the atmosphere, and safety measures and procedures to cope with emergencies. Furthermore, it was essential for them to explore ways of making pertinent information on the threat of a malfunctioning nuclear-powered satellite readily available to the affected States.

5. Lastly, his delegation remained confident that the Working Group on agenda item 3 would rapidly complete the elaboration of a set of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, in the same spirit of cooperation and understanding which had characterized its past deliberations.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.